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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of maternal employment status on college students' adjustment, perceptions of childhood, and appraisals of parents. A questionnaire packet was administered to 67 introductory college students in order to gather information about their mothers' employment status during different stages of development. Maternal employment status was found to be significantly associated with subjects' perceptions of childhood freedom, beliefs about the quality of parent's marriage, admiration for mother, and perceptions of mother's happiness. No significant differences were found between the three maternal employment groups (part-time, full-time, no employment) on the majority of childhood appraisal items including perception of life satisfaction, happiness, social adjustment, relationships with parents, intelligence, success, or self- esteem. However, subjects whose mothers had been non-employed or who had worked full-time when they were infants, were more likely to perceive a loss of freedom as a result of their mothers' work status. Subjects with mothers who worked full-time when they were infants were more likely to report the belief that their mother's work status had adversely affected the quality of her marriage. Also, subjects whose mothers had been unemployed during their childhood were more likely to report that they would admire their mothers more if her work status had been different. Other results of this study support the idea that part-time maternal employment is seen as being preferable to either full-time or no employment. (Author/LLL)

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Effects of Maternal Employment on Perceptions of Childhood In College Students

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Abstract

The present study investigated the effects of maternal employment status on college students' adjustment, perceptions of childhood, and appraisals of parents. A questionnaire packet was administered to 67 introductory college students at Ursinus College in order to gather information about their mothers' employment status during different stages of development. The packet also consisted of the Childhood Appraisal Scale (CAS), which was created by the experimenters, the Family Relationship (FR) and Social Relationship (SR) subscales of the Minnesota Counseling Inventory, and the short form of the BEM Sex Role Inventory. Maternal employment status was found to be significantly associated with subjects' perceptions of childhood freedom, beliefs about the quality of parent's marriage, admiration for mother , and perceptions of mother's happiness. However, no significant differences were found between the three maternal employment groups (part-time, full-time, no employment) on the majority of childhood appraisal items including perception of life satisfaction, happiness, social adjustment, relationships with parents, intelligence, success or self-esteem.

Introduction

The dual paycheck family is the most common family type found in the United States today. In fact, the rate of maternal employment for two-parent families with school age children is at least 71% and this figure continues to rise each year (Hoffman, 1989). In light of this, much research has been done to investigate the effects of maternal employment on infants, children, and adolescents. The effects of such variables as full-time or part-time employment, age of children during mother's employment, social class, gender of child and parental attitudes concerning employment and family, have also been studied to determine how a child's life experience is affected by maternal work status.

In making career decisions, many mothers worry about the long term consequences of their choices to return to the workplace when their children are still young. To date, there have been no empirical studies of adult children's perceptions of the impact of their mother's employment status. Although much is known about the short term consequences of maternal employment (based on studies of young children), there are relatively few investigations using adolescent samples and even fewer using adult subjects. Here we hope to review the available literature, and present research findings on college students' views of the effects of maternal work status on their lives.

There has been considerable debate over whether maternal employment is beneficial or detrimental for children. Over the years many researchers have postulated global negative cognitive, academic, emotional and self-esteem repercussions of maternal employment. To date, nearly four decades of work has failed to affirm the majority of pessimistic predictions about the children of employed women. Most studies have found very few differences between children grouped on the basis of maternal work status (Hoffman, 1989). Nevertheless, many studies have focussed on the possibility of specific negative effects, such as elevated family stress and conflict, that could occur in the dual-career families (Macklin, 1980; Skinner, 1980).

In their 1989 study, Bolger et. al. investigated how stressful work experiences might lead to conflicts in dual-career families. They collected daily diaries from both husbands and wives for a six week period in order to examine how negative occurrences at work, such as arguments with supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates, and work overload might predict feelings of conflict or arguments at home. They concluded that although there is less "contagion" from work to home than one might expect, interpersonal conflicts between husbands and wives clearly show a spillover from work, with arguments at work likely to be followed by arguments with spouses at home the same day (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, and Wethington, 1989). However, the Bolger et. al. study did not include a sample of single-earner families so they were unable to assess spillover from overload associated with a homemaker's workday. Therefore, although supporting the notion of displacement, the Bolger, et. al. work did not permit a comparison between households with employed and nonemployed mothers. Overload at work was also found to be

followed by a reduction in home involvement. The subject reported that when a spouse experienced work overload, they (the subjects) experienced an increased workload at home, while their spouses' home workload decreased (Bolger et. al., 1989). This suggests that spouses were shouldering more of the household responsibilities for their partners who were very busy at work, although this effect was more in evidence among the wives. This unequal sharing of household burdens could lead to marital conflicts if one spouse resents "picking up the slack" for the other one, or if one spouse takes advantage of this situation in order to avoid his/her household responsibilities. However, the Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, and Wethington study did not measure resentment, nor abuse of work-related excuses, nor perceived "shirking" of responsibilities.

Crouter, et al. (1987) also performed a study to investigate the effects of maternal employment on family conflicts. In a sample of 40 blue collar married couples with a baby or toddler, fathers with employed wives reported significantly more arguments with and complaints from their wives than did fathers with non-employed wives. The experimenters proposed that dual-earner fathers may be expected to do more than single-earner fathers in terms of child care. Thus the increased amount of conflict in dual-earner families may be the result of wives pressuring their husbands to participate more in child care. The experimenters also suggested that this pattern might only occur for married, employed parents whose dual-earner lifestyles do not match their own preferences and expectations for married life (Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston and McHale, 1987). Other investigators have also agreed that an important variable in mediating marital conflicts is a match between husbands' preferences regarding whether or not they work outside the home (Kessler and McRae, 1982).

Propper (1972) studied the effects of maternal employment on adolescents' relationships with their parents. Her research revealed that disagreements between parents and children were reported more frequently by children with employed mothers. Daughter of employed mothers reported more disagreements concerning the issues of dating, curfews and frequency of going out, while sons of working mothers reported more disagreements about clothing, politics and religion. Since sons and daughters of employed mothers tend to argue more on issues such as style of clothing, religion, and dating than children of nonemployed women (Knaub, 1986), family relationships may be perceived as troublesome in the home of the employed mother. As a result, children may resent the mother for her choice of employment, and attribute various negative outcomes to maternal work status.

Recent studies have found that, although there is no direct correlation between maternal work status and the father's satisfaction with the quality of his marriage, maternal employment may be problematic for fathers with traditional sex role ideologies (Kessler and McRae, 1982). In addition to husband's sex-role attitudes, negative effects on the father are also mediated by social class and the extent to which the father in the dual-earner family participates in child care. It has been suggested that, especially in the blue-collar class, negative correlations between

maternal employment and the father's morale are the result of the prevalent belief that fathers derive their sense of self-esteem from their role of breadwinner (Kessler and McRae, 1982). Thus, a man with this traditional belief would feel threatened by an employed wife who shares the role of breadwinner. This perceived blow to the father's self-esteem could be at the root of family conflicts, which would lead him to report negative feelings about his dual-earner marriage.

Many researchers have argued that combining work and family roles is detrimental for women. They contend that when women who are primarily concerned with their role as "mother" take on the added role of "paid employee" they experience an overload of responsibilities (Anshensel and Pearlin, 1987). This overload leads to strain and conflict within the family. It is a fact that employed women put in a longer work day, when both paid and unpaid work hours are considered (Pleck, 1985). Women retain the lion's share of responsibility for housework an child-care, even if they themselves are employed (Menaghan and Parcel, 1990). This would suggest that employed women experience a greater feeling of overload and resulting stress than their non-employed counterparts. Schwartzberg and Dytell (1988) found no differences between employed and non-employed mothers on measures of total family stress, overload, or conflicting demands. However, they did find that working mothers reported receiving less support from their spouses participation in household tasks has also been found to be a mediating factor in marital conflicts (Kessler and McRae, 1982). Thus, a perceived lack of support from a spouse could also lead to marital problems and family conflicts in some two-paycheck families.

In her review of the literature on effects of maternal employment in two-parent families, Hoffman (1989) described two general views of working mothers. One view is that employment is beneficial for a woman's emotional state, or morale. Being employed provides a shield against stress from her role as a mother. According to this perspective, employment increases the women's life satisfaction, thus making her a better mother. On the other hand, employment can be viewed as being too stressful in combination with the mother role. Research has been shown to support the former view especially among mothers of non-preschool children (Hoffman, 1984; 1986; Baruch and Barnett, 1987). Studies with both infants and older children have shown that a mother's satisfaction with her employment status related positively to the quality of mother-child interaction, as well as to children's adjustment and achievement variables.

Employed mothers often are concerned about not having enough time for their children because of their work status (Baruch and Barnett, 1987). Many studies have examined the effects of the number of hours of maternal employment. In several investigations, part-time employment appeared to be more advantageous than either full-time or no employment. Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987) used the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey to study 224 dual-career married couples with children under the age of 13 years of age. They found that mothers who worked full-time would have preferred to work fewer hours in order to devote more time to their mother

role. An additional study revealed that mothers who worked more than 20 hours per week were found to spend less time with their infant and preschool children than non-employed mothers, although this effect decreased with education (Hoffman, 1989). Owen and Cox (1988) found that infants whose mothers worked more than 40 hours per week were more anxious, which resulted in less animated and sensitive mother-child interactions. The number of hours worked was also found to be negatively correlated with children's achievement measures (Gottfried, Gottfried and Bathurst, 1988). One additional concern associated with the reduces amount of time that employed mothers spend with their children relates to opportunities to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Older children with mothers who are employed more hours are most likely to be involved in self-care arrangements after school (Rodman and Pratto, 1987). This relative lack of maternal availability could contribute to the failure of children to participate in activities outside of the home. Girls of employed mothers are found to be less likely to be active in clubs, organizations, and teams than girls of non-employed mother. Boys of employed mothers, on the other hand, indicated that they took more lessons in dancing, dramatics, speech, art or music (Propper, 1972).

In another study (Knaub, 1986) regarding children's perceptions of their parents, adolescent and young adult children of dual-career families were surveyed as to their satisfaction with this lifestyle, perceptions of family strength, and views on various issues related to the dual-career lifestyle. In general, children rated their families relatively high on perceptions of family strengths such as concern, respect, and support. The subjects mentioned having positive role models, financial security and the opportunity to develop independence as possible benefits of growing up in a dual-career family. The subjects also indicated that time constraints were the primary problems they had with both of their parents working. However, these children were highly supportive of their parents' dual-career lifestyle and they indicated that they thought the benefits of maternal employment outweighed the disadvantages.

Although much research has sought to delineate the negative effects of maternal employment, it is equally important to explore the possible costs associated with a mother's not choosing to work outside of the home.

Much of the literature reveals that maternal employment confers some advantages on children, including greater independence easier adjustment to kindergarten, and contact with a more extensive and varied adult support system. Children whose mothers are not employed receive less early socialization experience with nonparents which might be viewed as putting them at a later interpersonal disadvantage. Children of employed mothers are also benefitted in that sex role orientations of daughters become more egalitarian in their sex role attitudes (Knoblach, Chambliss, 1989; Brogan and Kutner, 1976; Meier, 1972; Gardner and LeBreque, 1986). Daughters of employed women tend to be more career oriented, more ambitious (Almquist and Angrist, 1971) and more often tend to plan to go to college (Hoffman, 1974). In a summary of the literature

Hoffman notes that the most egalitarian ideologies held by women of employed mothers, were those whose mothers held high status jobs (Hoffman, 1974).

Non-employed mothers have been found to report significantly lowered self-esteem and greater depression when greater family stress was perceived (Schwartberg and Dytell, 1988). The non-employed mothers also proved to be affected by more types of stressors and were more sensitive to family stress. Exposure to a depressed mother with poor self-esteem could have adverse effects on children. Furthermore, to the extent that these characteristics impair maternal responsiveness to the needs of her children, these qualities could foster frustration and resentment of mother in children. A deeper look into maternal non-employment may reveal a tendency of children of unemployed mothers to blame their mothers for their choice not to work, especially when it is associated with perceived maternal unhappiness.

In any investigation, the role of possible mediating variables must be acknowledged. One obvious factor that could affect the home life of children is economic hardship and uncertainty. Since many women work out of financial necessity, it is necessary to try to disentangle the effects of maternal work status from those of economic deprivation. It is possible that it is the lack of money in these families, and not maternal employment per se that prompts family discord. Financial need may create a situation where a mother is working at a less than satisfactory job, which could adversely affect the quality of her children's lives. Previous research has not confirmed this expectation. The effects of mothers' working out of financial need on their children appear to be positive. Ninety-five percent of mothers who work out of financial necessity were perceived by their adolescents (high school seniors) to enjoy working outside of the home. Only the remaining five percent perceived their mothers' working outside of the home as not enjoyable (Gardner and LeBreque, 1986). This shows that children did not perceive maternal happiness to vary as a function of financially required employment. The implications of this study suggest that the financial need for a mother to work may not harm the children of employed mothers.

The present study was performed in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between maternal employment and college students' perceptions of family and social relationships, and the degree to which subjects blame their mothers for their choice of employment. It provides an opportunity to assess some of the long term attributional consequences of maternal work status seen in young adults, since the mass entry of women into the paid workforce has been relatively recent. This study was designed to evaluate the extent to which young adults blame maternal employment for their own difficulties. The possibility that a mother's decision not to be employed is also seen as problematic by her children will also be explored.

While many previous studies have investigated the effects of maternal employment, this is one of the first to assess its impact on cognitions of a young adult sample.

Method

Subjects:

The subjects used in this study were 67 college students. The sample consisted of 25 men and 42 women who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. The subjects ranged in age from 18-27 years of age.

Procedure:

The packet used in this study was handed out to subjects in the introductory psychology class in which they were enrolled. Subjects were asked if they would fill out the packet in its entirety. Ample time was given to the subjects to complete the questionnaire.

The packet used in this study consists of three separate questionnaires, along with a page designed to obtain background information about each subject. The subjects were first asked their sex and age. Subjects then gave information about their mother's work status at each period of development. The stages of development and ages of each stage of development are as follows: infancy (birth to 1 1/2 years), preschool (age 2-5), childhood (age 6-12), and adolescence (age 13-15). The subjects were to report whether their mothers worked part-time, full-time or not at all at each stage of development.

Subjects also disclosed information about their mother's job, indicating whether it was professional, white collar, or blue collar work. The last question on background information requires the subjects to answer whether or not they had been raised in a single parent household at any time throughout their lives. Five subjects from single-parent households were excluded from the sample.

The first questionnaire in the packet is the Childhood Appraisal Scale (CAS), which consists of 18 items. This questionnaire was created by the experimenters, and aims to measure the subject's perception of the consequences of their mother's work status. The subjects were asked to circle a number from 1 to 4 depending on how strongly each subject agreed or disagreed with each statement. The statements are presented so that subjects indicate how much they feel their lives would be different if their mother's work status had been different when they were growing up. This permitted an assessment of the perceived impact of fulltime and parttime maternal employment as well as nonemployment.

The second part of the packet consists of two subscales of the Minnesota Counseling Inventory (MCI). The Family Relationship (FR) and Social Relationship (SR) subscales of the MCI consists of 97 items that were extracted from the original 355 item inventory.

The two subscales of the MCI require the subjects to answer "true" or "false" to questions that reveal adjustment or non-adjustment in family and social relationships. High scores on either of the scales are indicative of maladjustments, while low scores are indicative of adjustment in family and social relationships.

Results

Correlations among the dependent variables were obtained and analyzed. Examination of the correlations among the Childhood Appraisal Scale (CAS) items revealed that most of the items were significantly intercorrelated at the $p.<.01$ level and many were significant at the $p.<.001$ level. These findings suggest that the CAS scale is internally consistent.

An examination of the relationship between the scores on the Family Relationship Subscale (FR) of the Minnesota Counseling Inventory (MCI) and the CAS items revealed many significant positive correlations.

The Social Relationship Subscale (SR) of the MCI was also examined for its relationship with CAS items. Only one item of the CAS, FREEDOM ($r = .3199$, $p.<.01$) was found to correlate significantly with the SR scale.

Maternal Work Status

Means and standard deviations on the Childhood Appraisal Scale items were calculated for the three maternal employment groups (no employment, parttime employment, and fulltime employment) at each of the four developmental intervals (infancy, preschool, childhood, and adolescence). Oneway ANOVA revealed few significant differences among students whose mothers were employed parttime or fulltime, or nonemployed.

Group comparisons revealed no significant differences among the maternal employment status groups on most of the childhood appraisal items, regardless of the developmental interval being considered. Across the four age periods, there were no significant differences among the fulltime employment, parttime employment, and no employment groups in their perception that maternal work status had affected the subjects' quality of life, current happiness, success, self-esteem, social ease, intelligence, relationships with mother and father, and family atmosphere. There were also no differences in perceptions that maternal work status had affected participation in extracurricular activities at school (sports and clubs) nor family financial problems.

However, maternal employment status during infancy was significantly associated with the perception that maternal work status affected childhood freedom ($p.<.03$). Subjects whose mothers remained at home when the subject was an infant were most likely to endorse the belief that this limited their own freedom ($n = 46$, $x = 1.85$, $s.d. = 0.79$). Those whose mothers worked fulltime during their infancy

were also more likely to see their mothers' work status as having affected the subjects' freedom (n = 9, x = 1.56, s.d. = 0.73) than those whose mothers worked parttime (n = 11, x = 1.18, s.d. = 0.40).

Maternal work status during infancy also was significantly associated with differences in beliefs about the effects of mothers' employment on the quality of her marriage ($p.<.05$). Subjects whose mothers worked fulltime were most likely to see her employment as having adversely affected their parents' marital relationship (n = 9, x = 2.11, s.d. = 1.17). Those whose mothers were unemployed were least likely to attribute marital quality to maternal work status (n = 46, x = 1.46, s.d. = 0.55), while those with mothers who worked parttime scored in between the two other groups (n = 11, x = 1.82, s.d. = 1.08). This was consistent with a trend ($p.<.09$) to see maternal happiness as associated with mothers' work status during infancy (fulltime employed: n = 9, x = 2.67, s.d. = 1.00; parttime employed: n = 11, x = 2.10, s.d. = 1.10; unemployed: n = 46, x = 1.93, s.d. = 0.83).

Maternal work status during the subjects' preschool years was similarly associated with both parents' marital quality ($p.<.01$) and maternal happiness ($p.<.05$). Again, in both cases the fulltime employed group had the highest scores (n = 15, "marriage would have been better. . .", n = 15, x = 2.13, s.d. = 1.19; "mother would have been happier"... x = 2.57, s.d. = 1.02), the parttime employed group had moderate scores (n = 9, "marriage. . .", x = 1.56, s.d. = 0.73; "mother. . .happier" x = 2.00, s.d. = 0.87), and those with unemployed mothers had the lowest scores (n = 42, "marriage. . .", x = 1.43, s.d. = 0.50; "mother...happier" x = 1.90, s.d. = 0.85).

Subjects whose mothers had been unemployed during their childhood reported significantly greater belief that they would admire their mothers more had their work status been different ($p.<.01$, n = 21, x = 1.90, s.d. = 0.94) than those whose mothers worked parttime (n = 23, x = 1.52, s.d. = 0.59) or fulltime (n = 22, x = 1.27, s.d. = 0.46).

Although maternal work status during the subjects' adolescence was not significantly associated with any Childhood Appraisal Scale item, there was a trend ($p.<.07$) for the item assessing belief that "life would have been better" had mother's work status been different. On this item, subjects whose mothers worked parttime scored lowest (n = 23, x = 1.39, s.d. = 0.58), those whose mothers were unemployed had moderate scores (n = 8, x = 1.50, s.d. = 0.53), and those whose mothers worked fulltime had the highest scores (n = 35, x = 1.89, s.d. = 0.99).

In order to obtain a clearer picture of the impact of maternal employment across the four developmental periods,

three groups were created reflecting maternal employment extremes (fulltime from infancy through adolescence, n = 6; parttime at least from infancy through childhood, n = 7; and no employment from infancy through adolescence, n = 8). Oneway ANOVA showed a significant difference between the parttime employed and the other two groups on both the "I would have been smarter. . ." ($p.<.03$) and the "I would have done better in school. . ." ($p.<.01$) items. For both item cases, subjects whose mothers worked parttime were less likely to blame their intelligence or school performance on maternal work status ("smarter" $x = 1.00$, s.d. = 0.00; "better in school" $x = 1.00$, s.d. = 0.00) than those whose mothers worked fulltime ("smarter" $x = 1.67$, s.d = 0.52; "better in school" $x = 1.67$, s.d. = 0.52) or were unemployed ("smarter" $x = 1.50$, s.d. = 0.54; "better in school" $x = 1.63$, s.d. = 0.52).

A composite measure of childhood experience was calculated, including items tapping the subjects' admiration of their mothers, and their view of their mother's ability to meet her child's needs for support, independence, and to foster intellectual and academic success. Scores for subjects were obtained by adding the relevant item values. High scores indicate a greater tendency to attribute negative chilhood experiences to maternal work status. There was a significant difference ($p.<.02$) on this composite measure between subjects whose mothers worked parttime ($x = 5.71$, s.d. = 0.76) and those whose mothers worked fulltime ($x = 8.83$, s.d. = 2.79) and those whose mothers were unemployed ($x = 8.75$, s.d. = 2.19). A two-way ANOVA on the composite measure for sex and maternal work status confirmed the main effect for maternal work status and showed no main effect for sex nor an interaction effect.

In order to assess the extent to which that financial hardship mediated the obtained maternal work status effects, an ANOCOVA using financial need as a covariate was performed on the composite outcome measure. This revealed the same significant ($p.<.02$) main effect for maternal employment status reported earlier. This suggests that it exists independent of the financial need variable.

There were no significant differences in scores on either the FR or SR among the fulltime, parttime, and no maternal employment groups. This held true for all of the four developmental periods considered.

In addition, there were no significant differences among subjects in the fulltime, parttime, and no maternal employment groups (for any of the four developmental periods considered) on measures of maternal and paternal masculinity and femininity.

Perceived Financial Need

All fifty-seven subjects with employed mothers were divided into two groups on the basis of whether they were perceived as working as a result of financial necessity (n = 33) or not (n = 24). Group comparisons revealed significant differences in perception of how maternal work status had adversely affected general quality of life in childhood (financial need group x = 1.94, s.d. = 1.00; no need group x = 1.33, s.d. = 0.56; p.<.01). There was also a significant group difference in perception of how maternal employment had negatively affected the subjects' current happiness (financial need group x = 1.79, s.d. = 0.82; no need group x = 1.25, s.d. = 0.53; p.<.01) and self-esteem (financial need group x = 1.67, s.d. = 0.82; no need group x = 1.17, s.d. = 0.38; p.<.01).

Those whose mothers worked out of financial need reported greater belief that maternal employment had adversely affected their own success (f.n.g. x = 1.61, s.d. = 0.70; no need x = 1.21, s.d. = 0.51; p.<.05), family relationships (f.n.g. x = 1.91, s.d. = 1.00; no need x = 1.38, s.d. = 0.65; p.<.05), their mothers' sensitivity to their needs (f.n.g x = 1.82, s.d. = 0.92; no need x = 1.33, s.d. = 0.64; p.<.05), and their mothers' supportiveness and interest in their lives (f.n.g. x = 1.70, s.d. = 0.85; no need x = 1.25, s.d. = 0.53; p.<.05). Lastly, maternal happiness was differentially perceived as adversely affected by work status in the two groups (financial need group [f.n.g.] x = 2.47, s.d. = 0.72; no need x = 1.46, s.d. = 0.88; p.<.01.

Since perceived maternal unhappiness and financial need were so highly associated, a multiple regression analysis was performed on the composite measure of perceived adverse maternal work status effects. This revealed that when the highly significant contribution of maternal unhappiness (p.<.001) was eliminated, financial need did not significantly predict scores on the composite measure (p.<.69).

Discussion

The results suggest that the Childhood Appraisal Scale (CAS) is an internally consistent measure of perceptions of childhood effects of maternal work status. Most of the CAS items were significantly correlated with one another, indicating that the items were indeed successful in capturing the desired information about the subjects' feelings about their childhood. This finding also suggests that the subjects tended to answer all of the CAS items in a consistent direction.

Significant positive correlations were found between the Family Relationship (FR) subscale of the Minnesota Counseling Inventory (MCI) and 14 out of the 18 CAS items. These correlations reveal that subjects who perceive a high level of distress and conflict within their families are more likely to blame their mothers' work status for their own quality of life than subjects who perceive lower levels of conflict within their families. These correlations imply that perceptions of the family conflict are linked to children's attitudes toward maternal work status.

The relationship between the Social Relationship (SR) subscale of the MCI and the CAS items revealed only one significant correlation. Subjects receiving a high score on the SR scale, which indicates a problem with social adjustment, were also likely to agree with the CAS item "I feel that I would have had more freedom if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up." This lone significant correlation indicates that social adjustment, for the most part, did not influence whether a subject blamed his or her mother's work status for his/her quality of life.

Maternal Work Status

The results of the one way ANOVA for the CAS items revealed few significant differences among the subjects in the three employment groups across the four developmental intervals. These tests indicated that maternal work status was not viewed as a particularly salient determinant of subjects' quality of life, current happiness, success, self-esteem, social ease, intelligence, relationships with parents, family climate, participation in sports and clubs, or family financial problems. However, this failure to provide support for the idea that maternal work status is perceived to be an influential factor may simply be an artifact of the relatively small sample size used in this study. A study similar to this one performed on a larger scale would be useful in determining whether or not this is the case.

However, a few significant findings, as well as some interesting trends, were uncovered. Subjects whose mothers had been non-employed when they were infants, as well as subjects whose mothers had worked fulltime during their infancy, were more likely to perceive a loss of freedom as a result of their mothers' work status than subjects whose mothers had been employed parttime. This is not surprising, because children with mothers who are at home with them during the day obviously experience a lack of

freedom. Mother is there to watch over the children, enforce rules, discipline the children, and otherwise restrict the activities of the children at times. On the other hand, children with mothers who work fulltime are also restricted. Children with mothers who were employed fulltime during their infancy have a greater likelihood of experiencing maternal employment throughout their childhood. These children most likely have certain responsibilities thrust upon them because of their mothers' work status. For example, they probably have particular household chores that they must do before they are free to pursue their own interests, However, children whose mothers work parttime may have the best of both worlds in terms of freedom; they have a mom who is at home enough to take care of the household chores, but who is at work often enough to provide the children with a sense of freedom.

Subjects with mothers who worked fulltime when they were infants were significantly more likely than subjects in the other employment groups to report the belief that their mothers' work status had adversely affected the quality of her marriage. Subjects with fulltime working mothers also tended to think that their mothers would have been happier if their work status had been different. These findings are consistent with the studies that suggest that fulltime maternal employment might cause an increased amount of marital conflict (Crouter, et al., 1987). Increased amounts of marital conflicts could logically cause a decrease in a mother's happiness. However, other studies have shown that employment actually increases a mother's happiness. However, other studies have shown that employment actually increases a mother's happiness (Hoffman, 1984, 1986). The findings of this study appear to be inconsistent with this view of maternal employment.

Maternal employment during the subjects' preschool years was found to be similarly associated with beliefs about parent's marital quality and maternal happiness. This suggests that maternal employment may be most influential in affecting a child's perceptions when it occurs in these early stages of a child's life. This may be due to the fact that maternal employment may be most disruptive in families with young children. Difficulties with child care, mothers' guilt about not staying home with very young children, and added pressure on the mother because the children are too young to help out around the house are all factors which could adversely affect a mother's marriage and overall happiness.

Another interesting finding was that subjects whose mothers had been unemployed during their childhood were more likely than subjects in the other employment groups to report that they would admire their mothers more if her work status had been different. This is not necessarily a surprising finding. In today's society it is acceptable and even expected for women to have their own careers and for mothers to contribute to a dual paycheck family. Thus, when women follow a more traditional path by staying home with children they might be seen as not living up to the expectations of others. Also, college students in particular are preparing for careers of their own and therefore they would most likely admire others who have aspired to and who are successful in their own careers.

The results indicated that maternal work status during

adolescence was not significantly associated with any CAS item. Maternal work status is probably not a salient issue for adolescents because there are other more important factors that are affecting the adolescent's life experiences. Also, by this time, the child has most likely adjusted to any stresses resulting from the mother's employment, especially if she has been working for some time. However, there was a trend for subjects with fulltime employed mothers to report a belief that life would have been better had the work status been different. Subjects with mothers who worked parttime were least likely to report this belief. In this case, the mothers appear to be caught in a no-win situation: subjects tend to blame their mothers' work status whether they are employed or non-employed. Parttime employment appears to be a happy medium associated with less blaming.

Other results of this study support the idea that parttime maternal employment is seen as being preferable to either fulltime or no employment. Subjects with mothers who were employed parttime were less likely than subjects in the groups to blame their intelligence or their school performance on maternal work status. Scores comparing the three groups on a composite measure of CAS items also provided support for the idea that parttime work is advantageous. This composite measure included subjects' admiration for their mothers, belief in their mothers' ability to give them support, allow them to be independent, and help them to be successful academically. Subjects in the "parttime" group scored significantly lower on this item than subjects in the other two groups, indicating that they were least likely to wish that their mothers' work status had been different.

Financial hardship did not prove to mediate the effects that have been discussed, when an ANOCOVA was used to partial out the effects of financial need from maternal work status. It appears that the effects that have been found will exist in both the homes and where mothers work out of financial need and in the homes where the mother does not work out of financial need.

Non-significant results were obtained for both of the FR and SR subscales of the MCI when the full-time, part-time, and no maternal employment groups and all four developmental periods were considered. These findings suggest that maternal employment or non-employment does not seem to affect their perceptions of family and social relationships.

Perceived Financial Need

Financial need was revealed to be a significant factor in influencing the perceptions regarding maternal work status. Group comparisons between a financial need group (subjects who indicated that their mothers worked out of financial necessity) and a no need group showed many significant differences. Subjects in the financial need group were more likely to perceive that maternal work status had negatively affected the subjects' current quality of life, happiness, self-esteem, success, family relationships, and their mothers' supportiveness and sensitivity to their needs. Maternal happiness was also perceived by the financial need group

as being adversely affected by maternal work status. Perhaps these findings can be explained by the fact that mothers who must work out of financial need may have jobs that are less than satisfactory. This situation may cause the mothers to be unhappy with their lives, since they receive little reward from their jobs. When mothers receive little enjoyment from their jobs, their whole lives may be less enjoyable and the mothers may become unhappy and resentful, subsequently negatively affecting their relationships with their children. The effect of maternal unhappiness appears to contribute substantially to the above findings. Financial need did not significantly predict the scores on the above measure when the effect of maternal unhappiness was eliminated. This reveals that family discord that may result directly from lack of money in a family does not necessarily affect children's perceptions of the quality of their lives. Rather, maternal unhappiness is a much more potent mediating variable in children's perceptions of quality of their home lives and in their tendency to attribute negative childhood experiences to maternal work status. However, the results of other tests showed that financial need did not significantly predict the perceived negative maternal work status effects unless it was associated with the effects of maternal unhappiness. It appears that maternal affective response to working out of financial need mediated the effects of financial need on children. Financial need is associated with perceived negative outcomes by children. This might be the case because some mothers who work out of financial necessity are more likely to work at jobs that they do not enjoy than are women who choose to work for reasons other than money. Financial hardship could also result in a woman working longer hours or at a very demanding job in order to make ends meet. These conditions would not be conducive to job satisfaction or to maternal happiness. The results indicate that maternal unhappiness was a highly significant factor in predicting adverse effects of maternal employment, and financial need was an indirectly related factor.

Table 1

Comparisons of maternal employment status groups on CAS items

		Non-Employed		Parttime Employed		Fulltime Employed	
		$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
1.	I feel that my life would have been better if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
2.	I feel that I would be a happier person now if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
3.	I feel that I would be more successful if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
4.	I feel that I would like myself better if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
5.	I think I would feel more comfortable around other people if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
6.	I feel that I would have a better relationship with my mother if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
7.	I feel that I would have a better relationship with my father if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	
8.	I feel that my family would get along better if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.	n.s.		n.s.		n.s.	

* = p.<.05
** = p.<.01
*** = p.<.001

10. I feel that I would be smarter if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

11. I feel that my mother would have been more supportive and interested in my life if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

12. I feel that I would have participated more in sports and clubs if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

13. I feel that my family would have had fewer money problems if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

14. I feel that I would have had more freedom if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

15. I feel that I would have done better in school if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

16. I feel that my parents' marriage would have been better if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

17. I feel that my mother would be happier now if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

18. I feel that I would admire my mother more if my mother's work status had been different when I was growing up.

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